HARAMBEE

FLAME

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Issues Of '89

As we are approaching the doorway to 1990, it is appropriate that we review and discuss a couple of this ending year's issues which will have continuing significance in this upcoming year.

White Is Smart

One of the more provocative findings made by Sisters and Brothers examining the question of why some American-born African students in the U.S. public school system are dropping out or doing poor academically was that many of our children and youth have come to associate intelligence with whiteness; in other words, that they view scholarliness as being a kind of Caucasian trait, not unlike that trait of an attitude of superiority.

This is clearly an undesirable development. But as in any other issue, we must ask what has given birth to it. First, we have to look at school curricula. What is it about what our children are taught in the schools that would foster in them the belief that smartness, or intelligence, is characteristic of Caucasians more so than of other people? The simple and fundamental fact is that, with rare exceptions(George Washington Carver, for example), the history and other texts only cite Caucasians as models of brilliance in technological invention, theoretical sciences, literature, etc. If our children and youth see no African people as models of genius in their textbooks, what are they to do--invent them in their heads?

Secondly, the commercial media - both electronic and print - have, by their focusing upon African super-stars in sports and pop music, created an image of Africans in this country as a purely physical people. And when we read, listen to, or watch the news or other articles or programs and learn of the works of people in the scholastic

arena, it is generally the works of Caucasians that we learn about.

Thirdly, this is afterall, a racist society that we live in. And in such a society, it is not only racism that requires our attention but the effects of racism upon us, as well. We resent racism and the characteristics which we associate with those who perpetrate racism. Our children and youth look around themselves and see how much Caucasians own and control and, on the other hand, how little we own and control and conclude that Caucasians must be smart. And of course, if these Caucasians are smart and are top-dogs, what are we who are at the bottom of the economic and political heap?

Fourthly, smartness is boring. That isn't the truth but can appear to be the truth to a child or youth who sees that a student who gets the high grades is spending time studying instead of partying and otherwise having a good time. Of course, this is not always the case; but images can have as much impact as reality. Related to this idea of smartness being boring is the notion that our children and youth who are high achievers academically tend to "act white." There is a degree of substance in this notion. Part of it has to do with the fact that teachers are inclined to encourage, praise, and otherwise show favor towards those African students who learn to speak "proper" English. What this leads to is greater effort on the parts of these students and, consequently, greater achievement. The problem here is that what teachers(African and Caucasian alike) mean by "proper" English is Caucasian standardized English. In this scenario, African-American dialectical English becomes "improper" and is commonly associated by teachers with slowness of intellect. So, as an African student becomes adept at speaking this supposedly "proper" English and ceases to speak "improper" English, he or she begins to "talk white" and, in so doing, alienates him or herself from his or her non-"proper" English-spea-

king schoolmates and/or neighborhood friends and associates.

The Nice Liberation

In 1989, we witnessed the release of several prominent political prisoners from South African prisons, the desegregation of some public facilities, and other cosmetic changes in South Africa. We heard talk of negotiations and the possibility of Africans in South Africa having "a voice" in the affairs of the nation. Some of us saw all this as the charade that it was and continues to be. Some of us understood these government actions as being merely attempts by the deKlerk administration to appease or pacify anti-apartheid forces in and outside of South Africa while not actually giving anything away of his government's illegitimate authority.

But we did not only witness the granting of these cosmetic concessions but also continued talk on the part of anti-apartheid leadership of negotiations and hopes for a future "non-racial" South Africa. One African National Congress spokesperson made the statement that the ANC has no desire to "drive whites into the sea."

While an American-born African would have to hesitate to be critical of the pace and intensity of the liberation movement in South Africa, in view of the fact that Africans in the U.S. have put up with racist and economic oppression for nearly four hundred years, it is, nonetheless, absurd for the ANC and other organizations of African people in South Africa to be promoting the idea that they are going to be able to negotiate themselves into a position of power. Further, it is absurd that they should be speaking of the European occupiers of their land as if they were somehow just another indigenous ethnic group.

The problem in South Africa is not one of apartheid but of foreign domination. De Klerk and his fellow descendents of British, Dutch, and French marauders are no more African than Caucasians in the U.S. occupying Lakota land, for example, are Lakota people. And the ideology of "white supremacy," which is the bedrock of apartheid, is as firmly a part of the collective psyche of "white South Africans" as ever. If certain African leaders in South Africa believe these Europeans are going to be willing to "share power" in a "non-racial" South Africa, they are surely drunk with illusion.

Hopefully, 1990 will be a year in which we witness an end to the nonsense in South Africa and the resurgence of a forthright effort to force the hands of the occupation regime. And if it means the driving of these European murderers and thieves into the sea in order for there to be an independent Azania, then so be it.

More announcements:

The recently formed Omaha chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization meets on Wednesday evenings at six o'clock at the north branch library at 28th & Ames. More information about the new chapter will appear in the January edition of the FLAME.

We apologize for the lateness with which we've gotten the November and December editions of the HARAMBEE FLAME to you. We ran into some unforeseen copying problems.

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of conern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinction between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa(aka David Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words, through longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. We are not looking for poems which sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500

From Other Sources

Numbers Of African Homeless In U.S. Increasing

"Homelessness is an economic problem which hits Blacks harder than whites; in fact, some 40 percent of homeless Americans are Black.

"The large percentages of minorities among the homeless are brought to light in the recently published book ADDRESS UNKNOWN: THE HOMELESS IN AMERICA, by Tulane University sociologist James D. Wright. The book draws on six years of research interviewing more than 30,000 homeless people in 19 American cities...

"The disproportionate numbers of minority homeless is a relatively new phenomenon, Wright says. Most studies conducted in the early 1970s showed the homeless to be mainly composed of white Americans. Today, the racial and ethnic composition of a city's homeless population usually reflects the same percentages as the city's poverty population...

"...While few homeless people are middle-class Americans, most are not bums or bag ladies...six of every 1,000 people lose homes because they can't pay the rent. Wright estimates that on any given night half a million people are homeless..."

-Excerpted from "High Numbers Of Blacks Counted Among Homeless," which appears on page D4 of the Nov. 16 COLUMBUS CALL & POST(Columbus, OH).

African Youth Under Siege In Boston

"For the past six months, the black community of Boston has been subjected to a grotesquely racist 'search-on-sight' policy in the area including Roxbury, Mattapan and parts of Dorchester. Under

the policy, officially announced as part of a police campaign to 'aggressively go after suspected gang members', thousands of black youth have been subjected to harassment, provocation and brutality by the cops...

"...Testimony in recent trials reveals a pervasive pattern of police behavior: gun-wielding cops have set upon black kids, grabbing their throats, forcing open their mouths so that they can be 'inspected' for drug consumption. Black males are routinely forced to take down their pants in public so their genitals can be 'inspected' for hidden weapons...

"These dragnets have escalated in the wake of a heinous killing outside Brigham and Women's Hospital in Mission Hill October 23, where a black robber shot and killed a pregnant white suburban woman, Carol Stuart, and severely wounded her husband as they were leaving childbirth classes at the hospital...

"...The racist search policy was escalated to the point where more than 200 black males per day were stopped, searched, frisked and 'questioned' in the Mission Hill area alone..."

-Excerpted from "Boston's Racist 'Search On Sight' Dragnet," which appears on page 5 and 13 of the Nov. 24 WORKERS VANGUARD(N.Y., N.Y.).

Israel, South Africa, And The Arizona War Games

"...According to Patricia Golan in the July 14 B'nai B'rith Messenger, 13 Israeli F-21 Kfirs were being used at the base(Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Ariz. last summer) as a 'sniper adversary' squadron for training U.S. Marines. Piloted by Marine reservists who were trained in Israel, the Kfirs were built by the state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries(IAI) and are maintained by IAI's U.S.

subsidiary, Israel Aircraft Services(IAS).

"...In 1983, an Israeli-made 'drone'(a remotely piloted spy plane) was shot down over Maputo, Mozambique, with its IAI identification still visible. IAI upgraded the French Mirage 3-C into the South African Cheetah, which is virtually identical to IAI's Kfir. IAI refitted the U.S.-made Boeing 707s for in-flight refueling capability and sold them to the apartheid regime, enabling the South African military to fly the thousands of miles into Africa to conduct bombing raids. In 1987, right after Israel announced its 'sanctions' against South Africa, the IAI-made Astra, an 'executive' aircraft that IAI advertised as useable for maritime military purposes, was sent to South Africa in exchange for South African coal. The $7 million cost of the coal was credited to IAI...

"South Africa uses coastal radio stations developed by ELTA, a subsidiary of IAI. Another IAI subsidiary, MBT Weapons Systems, produced the Gabriel missile system carried by the South African Dabur parot boats. According to Jane Hunter's book ISRAELI FOREIGN POLICY, South Africa now produces Gabriel missiles 'under license, calling them the 'Scorpion'..."

-Excerpted from "What Are Israeli Warplanes Doing In The Arizona Desert," which appears on page 4 of the Nov. 22 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y.).

Resurgence Of Africanist Groups in Azania

..."South Africa's small, splintered Africanist groups have begun a series of highly visible political initiatives. These efforts were set to culminate on Dec. 3 with the formation of an alternative opposition focus to the powerful Mass Democratic Movement(MDM).

"The plans for this week's formation of a Pan-Af-

ricanist Movement(PAM) were announced after the release last month of Japhta Masemola, a veteran of the outlawed and virtually defunct Pan-Africanist Congress(PAC), but the first signs of the Africanists' newfound desire for unity predate it. (The PAC was founded in 1959 as a split-off from the African National Congress. Like the black consciousness groups that came later, the PAC believed that it was necessary for blacks to organize separately, in contrast to the ANC's non-racial approach)

"Two months ago, according to a mid-November announcement by PAM inaugural conference organizer Benny Alexander, black students formed the Pan-Africanist Student Organization. In addition to the student group, PAM will include the African Women's Organization; the Azanian National Youth Unity, formed in 1981, and organizations from 'all other sectors of the community', said Alexander...

"(The PAC has opposed the presentation by the ANC of a set of pre-conditions for negotiations with Pretoria...The PAC says it is premature to propose talks, given the current balance of forces.)

"The PAM's Alexa der noted that the new coalition shares the ideological position of 'pan-Africanist movements internationally, including the PAC of Azania(South Africa'...

-Excerpted from "Apartheid Foes Debate Strategy," which appears on page 17 of the Dec. 6 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.).

Namibia Independence/The Importance Of Walvis Bay

..."Namibia currently imports 75 percent of its goods and services from South Africa, and Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port, remains part of South Africa. The bay's transport link, called Namibia's umbilical cord, will aid South Africa's

continued stranglehold on regional trade. The bay's return could make Namibia a service link to the landlocked Copper Belt countries of Zambia, Zimbabwe and Zaire, while the Benjuela railway in Angola and the Beira corridor railway in Mozambique remain inoperable because of destabilization by South African-backed guerrilla forces.

"The bay is also a military lily pad for the South African army, being an easy jump to Angola or back inside Namibia. South Africa keeps between 4,000 and 10,000 troops in Walvis Bay, plus 1,500 that were recently withdrawn from Namibia. SWAPO demands that the bay be returned to Namibia, but South Africa seems intent on a lease arrangement. The U.N. Security Council sides with SWAPO and will probably take up the matter after independence..."

-Excerpted from "Africa's Last Colony Takes Sovereign Strides," which appears on pages 11 and 22 of the Dec. 13-19 IN THESE TIMES (Chicago, ILL).

Nigeria To Survey Its Languages

"As part of the projects scheduled for the world decade for cultural development, the Federal Government(of Nigeria) is to execute a survey of all Nigerian languages between now and 1991.

"Professor Jubril Aminu, Education Minister,... said the objective is to take the inventory and preserve those that are unknown or in danger of disappearing.

"According to the Minister, some of the other projects envisaged in the next two years include the establishment of a National Institute for Cultural Orientation, the development of a new curriculum aimed at integrating culture into the educational system at all levels, the establishment of a national gallery of contemporary Nigerian art and the

institution of annual festivals of indigenous children's games..."

-Excerpted from "FG To Survey Nigerian Languages," which appears on page 2 of the Dec. 1-7 NIGERIA HOMENEWS.

Islamic Code Main Stumbling Block In Ending Civil War In Sudan

"Sudan's military government is proposing a federal solution to end the civil war which has ravaged the south of the country since 1983...

"The key issue in Sudan politics is the status of Sharia law, the strict Islamic code introduced in Sudan in 1983. It was this, as well as the political and economic marginalisation of the black African, non-Islamic south of the country which lies at the heart of the civil war. Under the new proposal, the two main sources of legislation, apart from a national civil and criminal law, would be Sharia and customary law.

"Any province of Sudan could exclude itself from those laws, but individuals would not be exempt.

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Thus the more than two million southerners living in Khartoum, most of whom are not Muslim, would be subject to Islamic law. The repeal of the Sharia code has been one of the pillars of SPLA(Sudan People's Liberation Army)...(SPLA) dismissed the new proposals and repeated its demand that Sudan be a secular state..." -Excerpted from "Sudan's Military..," which appears on page 8 of the Dec. 1-7 NIGERIA HOMENEWS).

Community News

On Saturday, December 9th, Ernie Chambers, the lone African member of the Nebraska State Legislature, led a demonstration of thirty to forty people in front of the downtown headquarters of the Omaha Police Department to protest police harassment, intimidation, and brutalization of African people in Omaha. The following day's airing of "Kaleidoscope"(a local t.v. public affairs program) featured an interview with Chambers in which he cited specific instances of police violence, pointed out that the "war on gangs and drugs" is being used to target young African males for harassment, and otherwise discussed what he viewed as a growing level of police aggression toward the African community.

On Tuesday, December 12th, the Omaha City Council rejected, by a four-to-three vote, a scattered-site housing proposal. The proposal, authored by Omaha Housing Authority Director, Bob Armstrong, called for the demolition of the Logan Fontenelle projects and the dispersal of its residents - most if not all of whom are African - to normal housing in various neighborhoods throughout the city. "Little Viet Nam," as Logan Fontenelle is often referred to as, has been the site of an increasing level of drug-trafficking and drug- and gang-related shootings and other violence. During the City Council hearing on the housing proposal, a large number of people testified on either side of the issue. Many of the persons(mostly Caucasians) testifying in opposition raised objections rather typical of those raised by Caucasians fighting the idea of Africans moving into their neighborhoods--lowering of property values, crime, general reduction in quality of life, etc. Within a day or two of the Council decision, Armstrong confirmed reports that he was soon to be interviewed for a housing job in Houston.

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is observed from December 26 to January 1. Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is representative of one of the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

Nguzo Saba(Seven Principles)

Dec. 26 - Umoja(Unity) To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race.

Dec. 27 - Kujichagulia(Self-determination) To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others.

Dec. 28 - Ujima(Collective work and responsibility) To build and maintain our community together and make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together.

Dec. 29 - Ujamma(Cooperative economics) To build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Dec. 30 - Nia(Purpose) To make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Dec. 31 - Kuumba(Creativity) To do always as much as we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.

Jan. 1 - Imani(Faith) To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Kwanzaa Symbols (on following page)

Mazao(fruit and vegetables) The mazao have significance because they symbolize the rewards of collective productive labor. Moreover, as Kwanzaa means first or first fruits and it was patterned after the traditional celebrations that take place among African agricultural societies at harvest time, mazao represent the historical roots of the holiday itself.

Mkeka(place mat) Dr. Karenga states, "The mkeka is the symbol of tradition and by extension, history."

Kinara(candleholder) The kinara is symbolic of the continental Africans, our parent people. Since the early days of Kwanzaa, the kinara has come to symbolize our ancestors as a collective whole.

Vibunzi(ears of corn) The vibunzi represent children; thus, each family uses as many ears of corn as it has children. Emphasis is placed on the children, for they truly represent the hope for the future.

Zawadi(gifts) Zawadi should be given as a reward for commitments made and kept and are usually exchanged among members of a nuclear family. Books make excellent gifts. Those things that are handmade are encouraged. One should not fall victim to the commercialism that presently characterizes Christmas.

Kikombe Cha Umoja(the unity cup) Clearly, as the name suggests, the unity cup symbolizes the first and most important principle of Kwanzaa. It is used to pour tambiko(libation) in the directions of the four winds, in remembrance of the ancestors. This is done to honor the ancestors and to promote the spirit of oneness.

Mishumaa Saba(the seven candles) These represent the seven principles.

Back In Time

"The creator of lynching was a quaker, Charles Lynch, a well-to-do political leader of what is today Lynchburg, Virginia, and a member of the House of Burgesses. During the American Revolution, Lynch and his fellow patricians were disturbed with the outbreak of criminal activity in their area. Since the closest court was two hundred miles to the East, these early frontier people took legal matters into their own hands. An extra-legal court was established with Lynch presiding as chief magistrate. The arrested man was given an opportunity to defend himself. If he was declared guilty, punishments appropriate to the seriousness of his crimes were allotted: thirty-nine lashes in some cases, hanging by the thumbs in others, or in rare instances, execution. ..By the early 1800s...lynching became associated with the execution of an accused person...As Walter White observed, 'the number of victims increased in direct proportion to the growth of the demand for cotton and to the growing sentiment in other parts of the country that slavery was not only morally wrong, but economically unsound'.

"Surprisingly few Blacks were lynched during the greatest period of slavery expansion. Between 1840 and 1860, only three hundred persons, Black and white, were lynched in the South...There are several documented cases where Blacks accused of rape or murder were hanged or slowly burned to death, often in the presence of other slaves...After the Nat Turner rebellion of 1831, 17 slaves were lynched; other slaves were beheaded and their skulls positioned on poles on the public roads; and Turner himself was hanged, his body given to surgeons for dissection, and souvenir purses were sewn from his dried skin..."

-From page 116 of HOW CAPITALISM UNDERDEVELOPED BLACK AMERICA by Manning Marable

Announcements

For approximately two months, we have been receiving NIGERIA HOMENEWS, a newspaper "providing news about and from Nigeria to the Nigerian community in the diaspora and those interested in Nigeria. Equally, it provides news and information about what's happening to Nigerians in the diaspora and covers events that may affect their lives and living conditions.

"NIGERIA HOMENEWS shall represent the African all over the world. NIGERIA HOMENEWS shall inform, educate and entertain its varied readers..."

We recommend that you subscribe to NIGERIA HOMENEWS. For subscription information, write:

NIGERIA HOMENEWS
173 Kilburn High Road
Kilburn, London NW6 7HY

AFRICAN POETS IN NEBRASKA, VOL. III has been completed and may be ordered from the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization (P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68502-0500) for a $3 donation per copy. Discounts are available for bulk (ten or more copies) orders. This volume contains work by Ella Robinson, Dorothy Walker, Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa, Sammy Smith, Wili Otey, Donna Polk, Walt Gholson, and Robert Williams.

Larue Nedd, who is from Omaha but is now living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has written a book, BLACK LAWS, which has been published by One Black Man's Opinion Productions, Inc. The book, according to Brother Nedd, is intended "to spark the motivation in Black people to study and think." For more information, write to: One Black Man's Opinion Productions, Inc.; P.O. Box 6500; Milwaukee, WI.; 53206.

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